

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the problem of the study. It consists of the study background which describes the overview of the needs of teaching English for specific purposes associated with the syllabus design at a business school. Then, the research problems, purposes of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and significance of the study,

1.1 Research Background

In designing the educational program and curriculum development, needs analysis as the starting point is considered as a vital role whether it is English for Specific Purpose (ESP) or General English (Robinson, 1991; Hutchinson & Waters, 1994; West, 1994; Seedhouse, 1995; Iwai *et al*, 1999; Songhori, 2007) since English is not simply a school subject but also a skill that requires considerable content knowledge (Chen *et al*, 2016). Studies have found that there is lack awareness of the existence of needs analysis as a tool in a course design, especially in General English courses where the specific needs of learners are difficult to determine (Gardener & Winslow, 1983; Richterich, 1983; West, 1994; Long, 2005; Cowling, 2007).

In the last few years in some countries, the studies on needs analysis were wide-ranging in the context of ESP for management and fisheries, computer engineering, and business school (Cowling, 2007; Atai & Shoja, 2011; Mohammadi & Mousavi, 2013; Khoshsima *et al*, 2014; Liton, 2015). Whereas, in the context of General English course, some studies were conducted in order to develop the curriculum and the findings revealed that learners' actual needs, learning styles, strategies and the exits syllabus are not satisfactorily compatible with the current teaching situation (Oanh, 2007; Lambert, 2010; Mahmoud, 2014; Tzotzou, 2014; Hamlan & Baniabdelrahman, 2015; Chen *et al*, 2016). In Indonesian context, needs analysis studies have been conducted in various contexts such as in business, science, and technology (Floris, 2008; Sari, 2012; Saefullah, 2013). The studies revealed that the English program is rarely developed by considering the needs analysis but rather on the textbook or lecturers' judgment.

Many cases found that the course design relies on the textbook as the only syllabus regardless of what objectives learners are going to achieve in the end (Mahmoed, 2014). Further, Mahmoed underlined that if learners don't know what language they need in order to function

effectively in the target situation, educators or instructors who are involved in designing the program cannot measure the gap between what learners know at present and what they are required to know at the end of the program.

A study conducted by Tsao (2008) found that students from vocational schools system are lacking in language proficiency. Moreover, she states that the main reason is because the English education in vocational schools has not received any attention from the relevant authority whereas students' learning motivation and needs has been considered as a fundamental part of a successful language program (ibid.). Therefore, providing an English program which can meet the students' needs is crucial especially for students in vocational schools such as business and economy program since they must have specific needs to be fulfilled. Course designers are expected to design a program based on the students' needs analysis as supported by Mackay and Mountford (1978) cited in Albakrawi (2013) that when the needs are clear, the purposes of learning can be expressed more easily and the language course can become a motivating program for the students, and when the needs are not considered, the course might be based on unstable or irrelevant material.

Langham (2001) mentions that educators faced dilemma in developing English language programs for learners with what should be very specific goals. The problem is whether to aim at English for general purposes (EGP) or English for specific purposes (ESP). EGP has also known as TENOR (teaching English for no obvious reason) (Abbot, 1981) where the learners are generally classified as school students whose motivation is low and unclear, whereas ESP learners are usually found in higher education, having clear goals and higher motivation (Dudley-Evans & ST. John, 1998; Harmer, 2007). Moreover, though General English is classified not for higher education learners, most of institutions propose General English for the learners in various majors as stated by Alwasilah (1999) in Saefullah (2013) that in practice, English subject in non-English departments of higher education has been commonly called as general English course included to one of general courses (MKDU) offered and taught to freshmen in the first two semesters.

In view of the regulations, students of all ages start to learn English in primary and secondary classrooms around the world since English is on the curriculum (Harmer, 2007) and as the language of communication in the world, the role of English is indisputable (Chen et al, 2016). Therefore, it is different from primary and secondary schools,

in higher education, the institutions and lecturers have their own right to determine and develop the curriculum. In other words, teachers can set what materials, methods, and assessment should be included in the syllabus (Saefullah, 2013).

Regarding this, in Indonesian context, English is stipulated as a compulsory subject for basic and secondary education in line with the National Education Law No.20/2003 in chapter 10, article 37, and paragraph 1, point c where the implementation of the provision for curriculum development is assigned by the Government Regulation. Either as General English or ESP, English has been one of the required subjects in tertiary level of education that must be included into the curriculum and implemented in the teaching and learning in accordance with the National Education Law No.20/2003 in chapter 10, article 37, paragraph 2, point c, and the Government Regulation No.19/2005 in chapter 2, article 9, paragraph 2 on National standards of education. It is also specifies that the curriculum of the higher education is regulated and developed by the institution itself in reference to the Government Regulation No.19/2005 on National standards of education in chapter 2, article 9, paragraph 4.

Based on these phenomena, in teaching English as a part of the curriculum, teachers or instructors are expected to be able to analyze the needs of learners whether it is for General English classroom or English for specific purpose classroom in order to gain sufficient information to design an appropriate teaching learning process since effective language teaching can be achieved when teachers or instructors are aware of the learners' needs.

In response to the importance of needs analysis in educational program development, it is considered necessary to conduct a study focused on students' needs analysis in order to design a syllabus based on the needs. The research will be conducted in a Business school in Bandung wherein General English program is taught for three first semesters. The students were given General English. Along the last few years, the syllabus used in this college has been carried out without considering whether it has fulfilled the learners' needs. Nevertheless, in a language course, the content of syllabus should be based on the learners' needs (Nation & Macalister, 2010). As investigating needs has a fundamental role in education (Grant & Stanton, 2000) which the purpose is to help the curriculum planning, diagnose individual problems, assess learners learning, and improve practice and safety (Gillam & Murray, 1996; Lockyer, 1998), it is important for teachers, instructor, or course planner to discover the needs and consider the

appropriate materials. Thus, the collected information will be beneficial to educational program development, syllabi, and materials (Nagretti, 2001; Kikuchi, 2004; Cowling, 2007; Mahmood, 2014). In addition, the learning process which is based on the learners' needs will improve the learners' motivation and so make a proper learning process (Hutchinson & Waters, 1997).

1.2 The Research Problem

The research problem is formulated in the following questions"

1. What are the learners' needs of English in the context of a Business School program?
2. What type of English Syllabus is considered relevant to the learners' needs in order to propose an ESP-based syllabus?

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

This study aims to:

1. Investigate learners' needs of English in a Business School program.
2. Propose a type of ESP-based syllabus to fulfill the learners' needs of English in the context of a Business School program.

1.4 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study emphasizes on investigating the learners' needs of English in the context of Business and Economy at accounting study program in a Business School in Bandung. The investigation is expected to give beneficial information of what language skills that students need to learn. The result of this study i.e. a proposed ESP-based syllabus is able to give contributions to improve the English teaching at Accounting study program at the research site.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The finding of the study is expected to have some significant contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to provide informative ideas that can be used as a model to improve the English teaching program in ESP context, specifically, it concerns the relevant materials to learners' needs of English in teaching learning process. The result of this study is practically providing

information for the lecturers in identifying learners' needs for designing an ESP-based syllabus.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

There are several terms used in this study. First is needs analysis which focuses on activities and procedures of gathering the information related to the students' needs as a basis data to design or develop a course or syllabus (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2002; Nation & Macalister, 2010). Second is syllabus which refers to one of units in developing a curriculum that allows a curriculum to involve various types of syllabus in each of its design (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2002). The syllabus refers to an ESP-based syllabus for Students in Business school program.

1.7 Thesis Organization

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which highlights the basic description of the study. The second chapter concerns literature review strengthening theories and references of this study. The third chapter illustrates the methodology that was used in conducting this research. The fourth chapter outlines research findings and discussions. Finally, the fifth chapter points out the conclusion of this study and offer some suggestions for further research.